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International Writing Program Archive of Residents' Work

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## Writing Sample

Cristián Gómez

Includes "4 quotes, one riddle" and "the loss of sexual innocence."

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Cristian Gonzales GOMES-OLIVARES

*4 quotes, one riddle*

Like a blind man in a darkened room  
looking for the black hat that's no longer there, I confess  
not to have drunk distinction's fruit, whether  
from silver cups bought at the Polish court or from  
the rejects of a Parisian junk dealer:  
in fact, the panorama has been reduced, my dear,  
to these crummy bars where they confuse us  
with the generation of sixtyeighters, as outdated  
as our rotten, punky garments: we've spent our  
money just for the next glass, in imitation of the holy drinkers'  
life (who soon will learn their last hope's always in their next glass).

But oh, my sweet, pardon  
the poor taste of this exclamation, yet a high-anguished tone  
is needed in the briefness of your feelings: sand  
and sun will agree to protect us  
from winter's attempts to curtail joy's vast  
dominion. Though we're as far from the sun  
as from the sand, let us drink: no need for  
the waves, nor for the wind if the last glass  
can be drunk near enough to the next one.

I want the grapes, bitter on the tongue's tip,  
to bathe your palate accustomed to spits of others: so  
I gathered the best vine stock, planted it with  
my hands (from the skin comes the blend of fruit and thickness  
that sets these words apart from any others) that sought out  
other firm soils, and with the assent of no other army  
than that of sadness. Sunsets are the only sin of nature  
that could make you believe (if you let it go) oh my beloved,  
my dearest, my life, at least in this poem,  
in the beauty and the order of this world.

At least that might warrant  
having quoted, among so many others,  
from Dashiell Hammett, for instance, or from Joseph Roth  
And above all from Malcolm Lowry.  
The fourth is up to your wisdom.

*the loss of sexual innocence*

When law's privileges still were on my side,  
we climbed to the treetops with the weak old guard's  
nod and complicity, to drill the fortress' backward  
discipline. From the bog around our feet  
caused by the river's yearly overflow, surrounding the city, we did the best we  
could:  
to be present at our childhood's inauguration  
when law's privileges still were on my side,  
and the sun rose later just to let us go out in style.  
The first time we made love  
a poster was stuck to the wall in front of us  
of one of those grease monkey shops (no. 10 Julio, at Carmen)  
and the smallness of the cramped cubicle  
and the smile from the poster wall  
and the stains, records and announcements  
of other, previous  
solitudes